

1895, by the promulgation of rules permitting the creation of special gold accounts at the bank, for the reception of gold and gold certificates, and the issue of check-books representing payments exclusively in gold. The public were thus being gradually prepared, by the flow of a stream of gold through the Treasury and the banks, for the establishment of gold payments and the maintenance of a fixed relation between the credit rouble and the metallic standard.

This relation was definitely established in 1896 at three roubles of the new standard for two of the old, or at the ratio of two-thirds of the old gold rouble of four francs (\$0.772) for one rouble of the new standard, which thus had a value of 2.67 francs (\$0.515). A complete project for a new coinage system upon this basis was submitted by Count Witte to the Imperial Council, March 21, 1896, and was the basis of the ukase of August 8th, which provided that the paper rouble should be received by the railways, public offices, and the bank at the new rate until January 1, 1898.* These measures, positive though they were, were looked upon in certain quarters as only a provisional fixing of the rate of exchange, and there was still discussion as to whether the rate should be given permanence by the issue of new coins and by the offer to redeem paper roubles in the new coins at the bank.

Count Witte, in his annual estimates for 1897, reminded the Emperor that in view of what had already been done, "legislative sanction will add nothing to the dangers, now much exaggerated, which are attributed to the resumption of payments in specie, already accomplished in fact." On the contrary, he declared, so far as demands for redemption depended on confidence in the performance of the reform, the adoption by law of the fundamental principles of a sound circulation would tend only to diminish the risks of the reform, if any existed, and to strengthen to a higher degree the credit of Russia.³ These resolute views bore fruit in the ukase of January 3, 1897, which provided for the issue of

¹ I/orini, 100.

² *Bulletin Russe de Statistique** 1896, III., 737.